



for Saturday, October 21, 2000

Wardlow and His Muse

By Fran Heimrich, VA Central Office

"Art is poetry waiting to be spoken," said Steven Wardlow, first-place winner in the art competition's pastels category for his work, "Picasso and His Muse."

Wardlow is a native of Omaha, Nebraska. Growing up, he was a quiet child, very much the loner. His idea of a great day was to skip school and spend the day analyzing the work of the Masters in an Omaha art museum.

Wardlow, who has no formal art training, started painting when he was three. "I was so upset when I found out I had to go to kindergarten that I refused to leave the house," he said. "It wasn't until I got to school and saw the easels that I calmed down." Shortly after that, he ran away from home, leaving a note under his pillow saying he had gone to live with the Indians.

He served on an aircraft carrier in the Navy, and as an illustrator for the Armed Forces Radio and Television. When he was in his twenties, he wanted to see the ocean, so he rode his bike from Idaho to the coast of Oregon.

There he joined a Christian commune and learned to swim with the whales. The whales would come

into the Bay and he would join them on a raft. They were close enough that he could see the water run off their tails. That experience later became an inspiration for Wardlow—several of his paintings are of whales.

Wardlow sometimes uses family members to pose for his work. His wife has posed as a ballerina, and his niece posed as an angel with wings. When asked where he gets his inspiration, he paused and said, "My wife. My parents give me encouragement."

Wardlow said he focuses on his work by becoming what he paints. This allows him to feel from the inside out—to sense and see what he is painting. If he is doing a jungle scene, for example, he puts on African music. If he is painting a ballerina, he puts on classical music. He stays in this mode until the work is done. Most of his paintings take two months to complete.

There were times, when he was almost destitute, that he used pillowcases and bedsheets for canvases. When he was a child, his mother, Donna Wardlow-Keating, would give him cardboard to paint on. "He can paint anything he sees," she said. "He

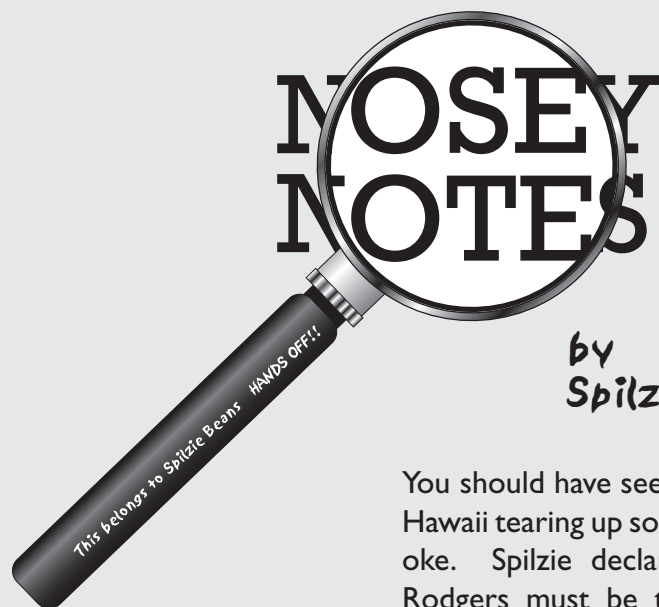
can work in any medium. He spent years teaching himself the Old Masters' techniques, learning to work from dark to light."

Someday he would like to try his hand at sculpting marble. "I would need a big shop and start out with a large chunk of soapstone."

Wardlow's favorite painting is of a modern primitive deity. "I work in all styles—masterpiece, realism, abstract, and impressionism," he said.

His collection of works ranges from portraits to animals, nudes, and still-lives. One day, if dreams come true, he would like to see a place built where disabled veterans could show and sell their work—a place that has rules and where the artists' works would be protected from theft.

Wardlow lives in Wolf House, a group home in Omaha. He's a recovering alcoholic. Today, he is an inspiration. For now, he's focused on completing a large mural of a wolf for the walls of the day room at Wolf House. The House was established by David Steinberg, a recovering alcoholic and drug addict, and is named for his grandmother, who provided the funds to establish the house.



by
Spilzie Beans

Spilzie's spies have worked overtime this week bringing you the best in Festival news. So, here's some of the latest gossip around that will serve to close out my column for this year.

Here is a poem that was passed to Spilzie from all the veterans:

From all across the nation to Constitution Hall

*Tomorrow we're going to show them
the best of us all.*

*We've waited all year for this
moment to come*

*So they'll know that what we have to
give is certainly not done.*

*For the many staff and volunteers who
have become so dear*

*We thank you from the bottom of our
hearts; we so glad that you're here.*

*Take with you the thanks from our
hearts*

*And know that from our minds you'll
never part.*

For those of you who haven't heard, the New Directions choir performed at VA Headquarters on Thursday morning. The acoustics were absolutely great in capturing the harmonious sounds from the voices of these amazing performers. Great job!

You should have seen the guys from Hawaii tearing up some hula at Karaoke. Spilzie declares that Bobby Rodgers must be the "lightest on his feet" hula dancer known to the world which makes it no small wonder why he and his fellow performers won the gold medal for their hula dance presentation. You guys are too talented!

Here comes the saddest time for Spilzie...the last column penned for the 2000 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. I would like to express my sincere appreciation to all those who provided the trash and juicy tidbits that found their way into my column. A special thanks to one from the West Coast who contributed greatly to the style and content of Nosey Notes for three issues... the one... the original. (Sorry, we can never divulge the true identify of Spilzie and my contributors.) Over the past few years, this column has quickly rivaled the most notable tabloid magazines. And we owe it all to you nosey, sneaky folks out there just waiting to tell on your fellow artists and performers. Take care of yourself and until our paths cross again, be good to yourselves and I wish the very best for you one and all!

Correction: It seems like Spilzie owes Kevin GRILLO an apology for incorrectly spelling his name. You remember Kevin, the Mommy's boy? Sorry Kevin!

From one Artist to Another

The 2000 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival marks my entrance into the Creative Arts world for veterans. When I learned I was going to attend I was overjoyed. Being a graphic designer, it was right up my alley. However, I had no idea what I was in for.

When I received the photos of the gold medal winners so I could layout the Souvenir Program, I was stunned by the quality of work I saw. At that point, I was anxious to have the opportunity to meet the artists behind the art. Then, when actually at the festival, to hear those powerful voices radiating down the halls as the performers rehearsed, I could feel nothing but pride at being associated with all this wonderful ability. The caliber of professionalism and talent that you exude is absolutely breathtaking.

I want to take this time to let you know how much I do appreciate and honor your talents, and as veterans, your sacrifices. Not only have you protected our nation's freedom, but with each brush stroke, dance step, and note you sing, you continue to preserve what our nation holds so dear. That we can express ourselves through our creativity, that we can push the envelope and we can show others, that even with hardships and tribulations, we as a nation and Americans, can, will and do overcome.

Please continue to push that envelope, continue to strive for that perfect photo, that perfect painting, and that perfect routine. You deserve the spotlight, now and forever.

So, as one artist to another, I thank you for your wonderful display of talent. As an American, I thank you for preserving my right to create, express, and live freely.

Andrew Scheller
Philadelphia VAMC

Festival Heads Southwest in 2001

By Frank Cimorelli, N.Arizona VA Health Care System

"Greetings from the 2001 Host Site Committee. The staff and volunteers at the Northern Arizona VA Health Care System as well as the community of Prescott are already gearing up for what will be an exciting and meaningful experience for all the participants," said Paula Marks, host site coordinator.

The Festival, which is planned for October 2001, will culminate with the stage show and art exhibit at the elegant Yavapai College Performance Hall. Participants, guests and family will stay at the beautiful Prescott Resort and Conference Center, located high in the mountains of Arizona (elevation 5,600 feet).

Prescott has a rich cultural diversity and offers many museums, historic sites, galleries, shops, fine restaurants and much more. Nearby artists' communities, Sedona and Jerome, are home to many galleries and exhibits. Prescott has near-perfect weather, with warm days, cool nights and views that go forever.

"Our week here has been very inspirational and the talent we've seen has motivated us to honor the talent and accomplishments of our nation's veterans. We are proud to be included in such a wonderful event," said Marks.

"The Washington D.C., VA Medical Center staff and volunteers have done a tremendous job planning this event and we will strive to meet the very high expectations they have created," said Joan Ricard, Service Line Manager, Geriatrics & Extended Care, and member of the 2001 Host Site Committee.

Our job now is to return to Prescott and continue our preparations while we remember every face we saw, every person we met and every story we heard. We're looking forward to seeing everyone next year in beautiful Arizona!

What is Your Best Memory From the 2000 Festival?

Arts Gram sent our roving reporter to find out what some of you will be taking home as your best memories from the 2000 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

Both Wayne Miller, a performer from Silver Spring, Md., and Rick Stang, a performer from Sartell, Minn., said they were impressed with the level of talent and professionalism exhibited here this week. "Since I can't do sports the way I used to, I decided that I could challenge myself through performance art," added Stang, who is participating in his eighth Festival.

Franklin Lacy, an artist from Jay, Okla., said he thinks every day of the Festival has been better than the day before. He sends special thanks to all of the staff who have made this event possible. Lacy said his personal highlight was working with sculptor Michael Naranjo. "He helped me 'see' with my hands and really feel the clay," he said.

The trip to the Vietnam Memorial was the highlight of the week for both Ron "Doc" Ross, an artist from Grand Junction, Colo., and Carlton Godwin, a performer from Santa Monica, Calif. "I had 26 friends on that Wall," said Ross. "Being able to visit them was a special moment for me."

"I went to that Wall to visit six of my buddies," said Godwin. "It was very emotional—something I'll never forget."

Nearly everyone said the new friendships they've made this week have been especially meaningful to them. "The most enjoyable aspect of the Festival for me thus far has been the way everyone has bonded," said Cora Watters, a performer from Lynx, Ohio. "I've just enjoyed hanging out with everyone."

For Robert Mason, an artist from Ouray, Colo., winning his gold medal was particularly memorable. "That and meeting everyone has been the best part."

Creative Quotes

"I can't believe I did it. It feels great, and I'm very excited about being here in Washington, D.C. I've been singing most of my life. I took voice lessons in high school and sang in the Navy at all the talent shows. I'm really surprised to have won and to be here in Washington; I've always wanted to come to D.C."

Monika Knowles, Miltonvale, KS

"Music has always been an important part of my life for the past 60 years. I derive much satisfaction from performing and from providing musical entertainment and enjoyment for others. I'm an eight-time gold medal winner in this competition, and have participated in the Festival show for the past seven years."

Joseph Lyman, Colonial Heights, VA

"Over the past 30 years I have worked hard to learn to sing as many styles and to teach as many students as I possibly could. I am now at a point that I want to share this talent as long as I can. At 55, I feel like I still have the voice of a 25-year-old. But who knows how long it will last? Singing is my connection to my feelings. It's a joy to sing here at the Festival with my veteran buddies, and to give and receive the most therapeutic balm that could ever occur—through music. It's a real boost to my morale, too."

John Prather, Draper, UT

National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Schedule for Saturday, October 21

Performer's Schedule		Artist's Schedule
	6am	
	7	
	8	
Brunch at hotel 8:30-11:30am	●	● 8:30-11:30am Brunch at hotel
Inter Faith Service, Ballroom D 9am	●	● 9am Inter Faith Service, Ballroom D
	10	
Hampton VAMC Choir performs at brunch 10am	●	● 10am Hampton VAMC Choir performs at brunch
Team leader meeting 10:30am	●	
	11	
Team leaders meet with participants 11am	●	● 11am Team leader meeting
Depart for Constitution Hall 11:30am	●	● 11:30am Team leaders meet with participants
	Noon	● 11:45am Depart for Constitution Hall
	1pm	
	2	● 1-1:45pm Artists at art exhibit to discuss their work with audience members
	3	● 2-4:30pm
Stage show performance at Constitution Hall 2-4:30pm	●	Stage show performance at Constitution Hall
	4	
	5	● 4:30-5:30pm Reception at Constitution Hall (artists please stand near your artwork)
Reception at Constitution Hall 4:30-5:30pm	●	
	6	● 5:30pm
Depart for hotel, prepare for celebration dinner 5:30pm	●	Depart for hotel, prepare for celebration dinner
	7	
	8	● 7pm
Celebration dinner and closing ceremonies at hotel 7pm	●	Celebration dinner and closing ceremonies at hotel
	9	
	10	● 9:30pm
Social time, dancing at hotel 9:30pm	●	Social time, dancing at hotel
	11	

Announcements

Parking

If you are parking at the hotel, please park on the lower levels of the garage. The upper levels are reserved for vans and buses.

Lost and Found

Lose (or find) something? Lost and Found is located in the Host Room.

Medical & Hospitality Suites

The Hospitality Suite is located on the 4th floor, Suite 442.
The Medical Suite is located on the 2nd floor in Suite 242.



BRUNCH

Assorted Chilled Fruit Juices
Country Style Scrambled Eggs
Pan Fried Potatoes and Grits
Thick Slab Bacon, Sausage
Fruit Filled Croissants and
Warm Cinnamon Rolls
Omlet Station with all the fixins
Smithfield Ham and Red Eye Gravy
Buttermilk Biscuits
Fresh Fruit Bowl and Assorted Cold Cereals

CLOSING DINNER (7pm)

Cesar Salad
Petite Broiled Filet Mignon and
Breast of Chicken Stuffed with Crabmeat
Potatoes Terrine
Medley of Fresh Vegetables
Warm Apple Strudel with Hazelnut Cream
Rolls and Butter